

1609/1511.



A

SERMON

PREACH'D AT

CHRIST'S CHURCH:

November the 5th. MDCCXXI.



Die Lunæ 6. Die Novemb. 1721.

IT is Ordered by the Lords
Spiritual and Temporal in
Parliament Assembled, That the
Thanks of this House shall be,
and they are hereby given to the
Lord Bishop of *RAPHO*, for his
Sermon Preached Yesterday at
Christ's-Church, and his Lordship
is hereby desired to Print and
Publish the same.



En: Sterne, Cler.

Parliamentor.

A

SERMON

Preached in
Christ's-Church, Dublin,

On *Sunday, November, 5th.. 1721.*

Being the Anniversary ^{Day of} Thanksgiving ~~Day~~ for the
Happy Deliverance of King *JAMES I.* and the Three Estates
of *England*, from the GUN-POWDER PLOT: *And also,*
For the Happy Arrival of His late Majesty King *WILLIAM*
on that Day, for the Deliverance of our Church and Nation.

Before His GRACE

CHARLES Duke of Grafton,

Lord Lieutenant of *IRELAND:*

AND THE

Lords Spiritual and Temporal

In PARLIAMENT Assembled.

By *NICHOLAS, Lord Bishop of RAPHO.*

*Published by Command of His Grace the Lord
Lieutenant, and by Order of the House of Lords.*

DUBLIN,

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Bookfellers, M DCC XXI.

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The Epistle of St. JAMES, Chap. iii. Vers. xvii.

The Wisdom that is from above is first Pure, then Peaceable, Gentle and easy to be Intreated, full of Mercy, and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy.



IN this Chapter, whereof my Text is a part, we have the proper Marks assigned, whereby to distinguish between the Wisdom of this World, and that which is from above, namely, the different Fruits they bring forth in Mens Lives and Conversations. The one is the Fountain from whence *Envy and Strife flow, which bring Confusion, and every evil Work*; The other produces *Purity, Peace, Gentleness, Mercy*, and such other Virtues, as, by the near resemblance they bear to the Attributes of Almighty G O D, do plainly shew the Divine Original from whence they spring: And these different Effects do necessarily follow from their respective Causes; for according as Men are under the power of one or the other of these Principles, they must take Measures in the Conduct of their

lives fuitable to the different Designs they carry on. The Wisdom of this World will unavoidably engage the Proud and Ambitious in *Strife and Contention*, and in Acts of *Violence and Injustice*, to enlarge their Power, and extend their Authority; and where there is Revenge and Malice in Men's Hearts, Deceit and Cruelty will be the Fruits of them, in their Lives and Actions, because these Vices cannot be served by any other Methods, that worldly Prudence can devise.

But the Wisdom that is from above, which is the governing Principle of the Life and Actions of a good Man, teaches him to advance his everlasting Happiness, First, by imitating the Purity and Holiness of the Divine Nature, and next to that by promoting the true welfare of Men; For this purpose it instructs him to be peaceable in his Deemeanour, to avoid all needless strife and angry Contention, and to pay a ready Obedience to those, whom GOD in his good Providence has appointed to rule over him. It makes him gentle in bearing with the Infirmities of others, in forgiving their Offences, and receding from his own right in some Cases, to maintain Christian Charity and promote Peace and Concord among Men. It teaches him to be tractable and easily perswaded when Reason is offered to convince his Understanding, without shewing



shewing any Obstinacy or Perverseness of Mind. Besides this it directs him to be merciful and loving to all Men, to detest acts of Cruelty and Inhumanity, which G O D abhors, and instead thereof to abound in good Works, to relieve and assist his Neighbour under all the Wants and Necessities of this Life, to the utmost of his Power and Ability. It makes him upright in his Dealing, and Obliges him to pay a greater Regard to Truth and Justice, than to the Persons of Men. But above all things this Heavenly Wisdom requires him to be sincere and free from Disguise and Hypocrisy in all his Words and Actions, and makes him abhor the Practices of those Men, who use Religion as a Cloke to conceal the wicked Purposes they carry on, under the Colour of Piety and pretence of doing Honour to G O D.

And by this Description of the Wisdom which is from above, we may judge not only of private persons, but of all Societies and Bodies of Men, whether they be directed by this Heavenly Principle, or by that Wisdom which stands in Opposition to it, and *descendeth not from above, but is Earthly, Sensual, Devilish.*

If any Society of Men, how Considerable soever for their Numbers, or formidable for their Power, shall disturb the Peace of Kingdoms, and overthrow

throw their Government; if they shall advance Doctrines, which have a plain and direct tendency to break the Bands of Christian Love, and even of Humanity with those, who differ from them in Opinion; if they shall teach Subjects to Depose their Lawful Soverign, and put their fellow Subjects to Death on account of their Religion, and if in Consequence of these Doctrines, Rebellion and Civil Wars, and all manner of Cruelty have often ensued, and would have happned much oftner had not the good Providence of G o d prevented them; tho' such a Society of Men should colour over these wicked Practices with an Appearance of Sanctity, and a pretence of doing Service to Religion; and tho' they should boast of their Antiquity and their Miracles, and pretend to shew many other Marks of a true Church, yet we may be assured by this Rule now before us, that whatever Wisdom conducts their Councils, it cannot be *the Wisdom that is from above, which is Pure, Peaceable, Gentle and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and without Hypocrisy.*

I am sensible that these words, as I have Explained them, should lead me to consider the Nature of each of these Virtues layed down in the Text, and shew what Use and Benefit they are of both

both to Societies of Men, and private Persons, for the Direction and Conduct of human Life. But in Regard to the Occasion of the Day, which must be spoke to, I find my self obliged to recede from the usual Method of enlarging on Texts of Scripture, lest I draw out this Discourse to too great a length, and therefore I shall only shew by explaining the particular Occasion of our coming together.

How far the Church of *Rome* has fallen from this Heavenly Wisdom, described in the Text, which is the safest Guide for all Societies of Men, as well as private Persons, and the surest mark of a true Church.

We are met here by the Appointment of lawful Authority, to give thanks to Almighty GOD, as the Office for the Day directs. *For the happy Deliverance of King JAMES I. and the Three Estates of England, from the most Traitorous and Bloody intended Massacre by Gun-Powder: And also, for the Happy Arrival of His late Majesty on this Day, for the Deliverance of our Church and Nation.* And we all know from whence those Dangers arose, that gave occasion to these Mercys of GOD, which we are now come together to Commemorate with Thanksgiving. It was a mistaken and furious Zeal for Propagating the Errors of the Church of *Rome*, that stirred up a *Popish* Party in the Reign of
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King *James* I. to endeavour the Establishing their Religion in these Nations, and setting up once more the Jurisdiction of the See of *Rome*, by a Conspiracy, that casts so foul a Blemish on human Nature, that it ought to lie for ever concealed and forgotten, and be no more mentioned to the Reproach of Mankind, did not a sense of Gratitude to *G O D* for the Deliverance He wrought, as upon this Day, and a due Regard to our own Security, for the Time to come, oblige us to have it in Remembrance.

To serve the Purposes of these Men, the King and Queen and all the Royal Family were marked out for Destruction, the young Princess only excepted, whose Life was to be preserved in order to Her Advancement to the Throne, in hopes that Her tender Years would favour the Designs of the Conspirators, and make it easy for them to reconcile Her to that Religion, which was to be forced upon the Nation by Fire and Sword: And to remove all Opposition, that might obstruct this Design, the three Estates of *England*, with the King then assembled in Parliament, were to be destroy'd by so sudden a Blow, as would allow no Time to provide for Safety, and scarce leave room for any single Person to escape. And had the Nation been deprived, as was intended, of the King and His
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Royal Family, with the Nobility, Clergy and Commons then Assembled in Parliament; this, in all probability, must have put it in the power of the Conspirators supported by the Authority of the See of *Rome*, to have brought about a change of Religion in these Nations, and at the same time to have destroyed the Liberties of the People, which are not very consistent with a *Popish Reign*, and gained all their Ends of a Nation, that could have made no Resistance, if they had been left without Government to direct them, without any center of Power to resort to for their Defence, and without Succours from abroad to assist them, and rendered unable, in that state of Perplexity and Confusion, to form any resolution to withstand their Enemies Designs.

But great Caution was to be used in this Affair. Human Nature is apt to Shrink and draw back from the execution of an Enterprize so full of Horror and Astonishment as this was, and it was feared that some Bowels of Pity and Compassion might possibly arise in some of the Confederates, which might incline them either to reveal the secret to be Committed to them, or to withdraw themselves from this Cause in favour of some Persons, who were to perish by the Conspiracy. And for this reason it was found expedient that certain Jesuits among
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them (an Order of Men well versed in dark Designs) should Administer an Oath to each of the Conspirators, neither to disclose the Secret of this Plot to any Person, nor desist from the Execution of it without leave from the rest, who were Associate in this Undertaking. And to add greater Security to their Design, the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was at the same time made a Bond of Iniquity, and they were all solemnly engaged to Secrecy by that Holy Rite, and to persevere in the Purpose they had undertaken, for the utter Extirpation of what they falsely call Heresy, and the Advancement of the *Popish Religion*.

In this manner was that unnatural Conspiracy formed, with all the Caution and Security that Human Prudence could contrive, when it pleased G O D in his great Mercy to overrule the Counsels of these wicked Men, and to make a dark Hint in a Letter writ by one of the Conspirators, the means of disclosing their Secret Purposes, defeating their pernicious Designs, and saving Three Nations from Destruction, thereby giving us an Occasion on this Day to bleis His Name for so great a Deliverance.

There are many other Circumstances in the History of this Plot too tedious to be now related, that both aggravate the Guilt of the Conspirators, and magnifie the Goodness of G O D's Providence to us
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in the Time and Manner of its Discovery ; but these I shall pass by, and only Observe, on the Occasion I have now been speaking to, the great Wisdom of our Ancestors, in appointing certain Anniversaries of Thanksgiving to G O D for our Deliverance from *Popish Conspiracies*.

Much Indultry has been used ever since the Reformation, to possess the Protestants of these Kingdoms with a favourable Opinion of the *Popish Religion*, and for this Purpose, whatever is harsh or shocking in its Doctrines, has been softened by Art, and made plausible by the Wit and Management of Designing Men ; And when at any Time these Doctrines have brought forth their unhappy Fruits in forming Conspiracys, or raising up Rebellions, whereof we of these Nations have had our share, the Facts have been either unjustly charged on the Innocent, or else in plain Contradiction to the most Authentick Records of History, they have been flatly denyed. And this has been done with Design to quiet our Fears, or to remove our Mistrusts and Jealousies, and make us insensible of Danger from the Church of *Rome*, a Delusion, which, should it once pass upon us, would soon prove Fatal to our Church, and our Country too. For the *Popish Religion*, so pernicious to both of them heretofore, continues still the same ; there has been

no Reformation of Doctrine in the Church of *Rome*, that we hear of, nor does it appear that their fiery Zeal for the Extirpation of our Religion is at all abated, or become more gentle, or tractable than it was before. The same Spirit of *Persecution* which heretofore distressed these Nations, is kept up among them to this Day, and would no doubt have the same dismal Effects it had formerly, should we lay our selves open to their Designs, and be perswaded by the Insinuations of Artful Men, to make Tryal of their Clemency once more.

And therefore to prevent these Evils, our Laws have appointed certain Festivals, or Days of Thanksgiving, which they have distinguished by proper marks of Solemnity, to call to our Remembrance G O D's Mercys of old, in the Deliverance of our Forefathers from *Popish Conspiracys*, and to warn us by what hapned in their Days, to be still upon our Guard against the like Practices for the Time to come.

But it has pleased G O D to make this Day Remarkable by another Occasion of Thanksgiving, which must not be forgotten; and we are now called on to Commemorate the happy Arrival of his late Majesty King *WILLIAM*, as on this Day, for the Defence of our Religious and Civil Rights, against the Incroachments of a King trained up in the *Popish Religion*.

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I am not willing to cast any needless Reflections on the Memory of that unfortunate King, or insult over the Ashes of the Dead; this would be an ungenerous Triumph, which the Words now before me for my Direction, would in no wise countenance or allow.

But that I may not be wanting in the Duty incumbent upon me to shew forth the Mercys of God upon this Occasion, we must call to mind that thro' the influence of *Popish Counsels*, that unhappy Prince was prevailed on, to violate the Engagements he had solemnly made, to support our Constitution in Church and State. The legal Securities of our Religion and Liberties were broke thro', and new Incroachments were continually made on our Rights and Immunities, by the hasty advices of a *Popish Party*, who were Impatient of Delay, and made bold and quick Advances to overthrow our Religion, and set up their own. All saw the Tendency of these Counsels, and the ill Effects of them were already felt by many; they were too visible to be dissembled, and too grievous not to be lamented by every one that wished well to our Constitution. The Tears and Complaints of an injured People, oppressed with wrong, and afflicted for the Miserys they saw approaching, were of no Weight to defeat the Purposes of these

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evil Counsellors, or so much as to delay the Execution of those Designs, that were formed for the utter Subversion of the Religion and Libertys of these Nations. Distress and sore Calamity came on apace, and the Crueltys inflicted on account of Religion in a former *Popish Reign*, were now called to Remembrance, and with great reason it was fear'd, that Bonds and Imprisonments would soon be our Portion, and that the Stake would again become the Test of our Faith, and be made a Tryal of the Sincerity of our Religion.

And now the state of our Church seem'd to be but too well described by the Prophet's Parable of the Vineyard; for after that God in his good Providence *had fenced our Vineyard, and gathered out the Stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest Vine, and built a Tower in the midst of it, and made a Wine-Press therein*, the Time seem'd now to draw near, when for the Sins and Iniquities of these Nations, He was determin'd to *take away the Hedg thereof, that it should be eaten up, and to break down the Wall thereof, that it should be troden down, and to lay it Wast, that it should be no more pruned, or digged, but that Bryars and Thorns should come up in it, and to command the Clouds, that they should Rain no more Rain upon it.*

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And at this Time of Distress, *when the Voice of Fear and Trembling was heard, and all faces were turned into paleness*, then it pleased G O D to send us Deliverance by the Hands of a Prince fitted by Birth, Nature and Education for so great and difficult a Work. He had Courage and Wisdom to defend our Cause, and G O D blessed his Undertaking with Success, and brought him safe, as upon this Day, to fulfil the Wishes of an injured People, and open a Sanctuary for the Oppress'd, and soon after settled him in Peace, and with great Honour on the Throne. And if we except a few, every Heart was then warm'd, and every Mouth filled with the Praises of G O D, and of him, who was the Instrument of so great Deliverance, when we found our Church preserved, our Laws revived, and the Ancient Libertys of the People both Restored and Inlarged. And we of this Nation seemed then to be particularly affected with a Sense of these Blessings, in as much as our Sufferings had been of a longer Continuance, and more grievous than what was felt by the rest of our Fellow-Subjects.

But the Care of this Wise Prince extended yet further, to transmit these Blessings to our Posterity, and prevent, so far as human Prudence can provide, the like Arbitrary Incroachments on our Constitution for the time to come. For this purpose
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the Succession of the Crown of these Realms was limited by Law to a Protestant Line; and Blessed be G O D these Laws have taken Effect, and we reap the Fruit of them at this Day under the Happy Influence of his Majesty's Reign, whom G O D in His great Mercy has raised up for the support of our Establishment, having strengthened his Arm, as he has inclin'd his Heart to defeat all the Attempts of our Enemies to overthrow it. And this great Blessing has received an additional Value from the happy Foundation that is lay'd for our future Security, in that it has pleased G O D to strengthen the Royal Line by a Numerous Issue trained up in the Protestant Religion, and Instructed with great Care in all the Virtues that are proper to adorn the Throne, and to be a Shield and a sure Protection to our Posterity.

What the particular Occasion of our coming together has now led me to say, sufficiently shews us how opposite to that Heavenly Wisdom described in the Text, is the Policy of the Church of *Rome*, in propagating her Faith by open Violence, or by secret Conspiracys, accompanied with all the Circumstances of Rage and Cruelty; for it were easy to shew, that these are no more than the natural Consequences of some Doctrines that are taught and maintained in the Church of *Rome*, as that of Deposing

posing Princes, and Absolving Subjects from their Allegiance, and others of the like Tendency, whereby that Church has often times distressed these Nations, and as often manifested the Riches of G o d's Mercys to us in the Work of our Deliverance, and marked our Kalendar with Days of Thankgiving.

This Spirit of Persecution may be of Use to promote Temporal Power and Authority in the Church, as Tyranny does in the State, and be found a proper Expedient for supporting an usurp'd Jurisdiction by Intimidating the Hearts of those, who would otherwise oppose the Usurpation. But it is to confound the Nature of things, to make Violence, and Cruelty the means of propagating the Christian Religion so Conspicuous for Peace and Charity, and to go about to Establish the just Powers wherewith Christ has vested his Church for the good of Mankind, by studying how to destroy Mens Lives for this Purpose.

The Church of *Rome* may Glory in their Wisdom, which Teaches them *to bring Life and Immortality to Light*, by making use of the Instruments of Death and Destruction, and should teach us also not to trust the Power of Destroying us in their Hands, who shew no Pity or Compassion in using it. But Blessed be God we live in the Communion of a Church, that Promotes the Christian Faith, in

a way truly Accommodate to the Spirit and Genius of Christianity, by *Meekness and long Suffering*, by *Mercy, Loving Kindness and Charity to all Men*, and by bearing with the Weakness of some and the Obstinacy of others, and the Prejudice of all, who differ from us in Opinion about Matters of Religion, till we convince their Understandings by Reason or Scripture; *For the Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be Gentle unto all Men, apt to Teach, patient, in Meekness Instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.* And accordingly we are Taught to abhor all Acts of Violence and Cruelty in order to extend the Bounds of our Church, or enlarge her Authority, being assured, *That the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*, and that the true Interest of Religion can never be promoted by a furious Zeal, or an outrageous Passion, by stirring up Sedition, or forming Conspiracies against States and Kingdoms, or by shewing any Marks of Disobedience to lawful Authority, but by *fearing God and honouring the King*, and *as much as in us lies, by living peaceably with all Men.*

These are the Maxims of our Christian Policy; and though the Church of *Rome* may condemn them as Weak and Insufficient, and indeed they are so to serve the Ends of Ambition, and promote worldly Grandure

Grandure ; yet what gives them a just Claim to our Esteem is, that they are agreeable to the *Wisdom which is from above*, which is the surest Mark of a true Church, and the safest Guide to direct us how to advance the Honour of G O D and set forward the Salvation of Men. And as *the Wisdom of this World is foolishness with G O D*, so these Virtues of Mercy, Charity, Gentleness and the like, tho' in the Opinion of worldly minded Men, they are weak and of low Esteem, or of no Account in pursuance of their Designs, yet in the sight of G O D they are the highest Wisdom, and some of the most valuable Benefits he bestows on Men in this Life, when he is pleased to inspire their Minds with these Graces, to answer the Ends and Purposes of Religion.

To conclude, Let us shew forth the Power of that Heavenly Spirit, which Guides and Directs our Church, by *having our Conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ*, in that Purity and Perfection in which we have been taught it ; and as we are better Instructed in Matters both of Faith and Practice than they, who are of the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, so let our Lives be adorned with a greater Degree of Piety and Charity, and all other Christian Graces, than theirs are, who want the Advantages that we enjoy. To live up to the Rules of our Holy Religion will be the best Testimony we can give of our Gratitude to G O D, for having preserved it so long among us, after all the Attempts that have been

been made by our Enemies to root it out. And it will be the likeliest Means also of prevailing with GOD, to Shield and Protect us in all Times of Difficulty and Distress hereafter, and if secret Plots shall be Formed, or Rebellions shall arise for the Subversion of our Church, or the Ruin of our Country, or for Betraying it into the Hands of a Forreign Power, which GOD of his great Mercy avert, this will be our best Security, that by a steady Obedience to the Will of GOD, we have placed ourselves under the safe Protection of his Good Providence, so that we need not be afraid while GOD is on our side, *who bringeth the Counsel of Wicked Men to Nought, and maketh the Devices of the People of none Effect, who breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in sunder, and who scattereth the People that delight in War.*

But if on the other Hand we make an ungrateful Return for the many Deliverances we have received from the Hands of GOD, if we forget his Benefits, and despise his Favours, and if our Sins and Iniquities increase, as his Mercies abound towards us, what can we look for in the End thereof, but to feel the Weight of His heavy Displeasure, and that He will deal with us, as he did of Old with the People of *Israel*, with whom he Expostulates for their shameful Ingratitude in this Manner? *Did not I deliver you, says GOD, from the Egyptians, and from the*
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the Amorites, and from the Children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also and the Amalekites, and the Maonites did Oppress you, and ye cried to me, and I Delivered you out of their Hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other Gods, wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the Gods which ye have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your Tribulation. We are not indeed fallen into the Idolatry of the Israelites, but we would do well to consider, whether the Infidelity, Profaneness and Contempt of Religion, together with the Pride, Luxury, and Intemperance, and many other Immoralities that prevail among us, may not justly provoke GOD, either to give us up to the Will of our Enemys, or Afflict us with some other grievous Calamity, unless our timely Repentance stops the Hand of Divine Justice, and *turns away the Wrath of GOD*, which these Sins and Iniquities have deserved: They are a great Dishonour to a Nation professing the Christian Religion, and are become the just Reproach of the Times we live in.

I am sensible that to Depreciate the Manners of the present Times, and commend the Virtues of former Ages, is an Argument for Reformation that has been often made use of with more Zeal than Justice; every Age has it's Vices, and, Praised be GOD, it's Virtues too; yet so far as History can

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lead us to understand the Opinions and Practices of former Times, I am perswaded it will be found upon Enquiry, That since the first Establishment of Christianity in these Nations, not many Ages, if any, have layen under so just an Imputation of Infidelity and Impiety and all Manner of Prophaness as this wherein we live. And should we still continue in these Abominations, after GOD has shewed us so great Deliverance, and by many signal Acts of his Divine Providence often rescued us from the brink of Destruction, should we not have Reason to fear that *he would at last be angry with us till we were utterly Consumed, so that there should be no Remnant or Escaping.*

But that we may all so amend our Lives, that God may remember his tender Mercys and loving Kindness towards us which have been ever of Old, and still continue to encompass us with his Favour as with a Shield, GOD of his infinite Mercy grant for the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, *To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glory henceforth for ever more.*

F I N I S.

